

AN
A D D R E S S *S. Sutton*
TO THE
RIGHT WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR
AND CORPORATION,
TO THE
WORSHIPFUL THE WARDENS AND
CORPORATION OF THE TRINITY-HOUSE,
AND TO THE
WORTHY BURGESSES
OF THE
TOWN OF KINGSTON-UPON-HULL.

By DAVID HARTLEY, Esq.

CONTAINING
NEW AND FORCIBLE ARGUMENTS
IN FAVOUR OF A
PARLIAMENTARY REFORM
AT THIS REMARKABLE AERA.

TO WHICH IS ADDED A
L E T T E R
TO THE
RIGHT HON. CHARLES JAMES FOX,
By JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq.

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A D D R E S S, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

THIS Address, which I now present to you, might appear a novel and unaccustomed mode of canvassing for a seat in Parliament, if it were to be considered merely in the light of an Advertisement of Solicitation. The circumstance of an expected vacancy in your borough, on account of one of the Members elected by you at the late general election having been likewise returned to Parliament for the county of York, will certainly at the first view lead you to that construction; However, by the subsequent parts of this Address, you will perceive many mixed views and considerations, which have led me out of the ordinary course. The first is derived from those sentiments of Respect and Deference, which I consider as peculiarly due from myself to you my late constituents. I am sensible it would be an unbecoming conduct in me, to harrass you with perpetual importunities. The many favours which I have received from you, in your public capacity, demand this forbearance on my part, with respect to any future pretensions. There is but one circumstance which can in any degree suspend the final and absolute conclusion against me, which is, that throughout the whole course of my parliamentary service, in your representation, I have never received the slightest hint of

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reproach

reproach from any single individual of my late constituents, for any convicted, or even suspected breach of trust, in my public conduct; and I esteem this testimony of your approbation as one of the greatest obligations for which I am indebted to you.

I am fully aware, that a good opinion of personal integrity or industry, may not contain the total of motives, which ought to influence Electors in the choice of a Representative; but it comprises so large a proportion of the fundamentals, that if I have been so fortunate as to give you satisfaction in those points, I hope you will not think me unreasonable, if I wish to demur against the conclusion, tacitly implied by the change in your choice at the late Election. I am not only unconscious of entertaining any principles inconsistent with the Constitution, or safety of our country, but totally ignorant of any subsisting diversity of public opinions, from my late Constituents. To what cause then am I to impute the change? Or, what conclusions am I to draw from it? But yesterday I was your Representative, unaccused, and unsuspected, of any selfish or sinister views. At the dissolution of Parliament, I was received amongst you with every possible mark of cordiality and personal favour. At the Election, indeed, your choice fell upon two other Gentlemen, unfavourably for me. Thus far, however, there is nothing but what has happened a thousand times, in the vicissitudes of elective representations, without any unfavourable imputation to one side, or any complaint against the other. It is understood that one of your Members intends to vacate his seat. In this situation I feel myself embarrassed in what manner to direct my conduct towards you. I should be extremely reluctant on the one hand, to obtrude myself upon you with unwelcome solicitation and importunity; and on the other, I should be very unwilling, by a silent abdication, to appear to you to have so far forgotten all your past favours, and the public honour thence derived, as not to be ambitious of the recovery

of them. I would equally avoid the assertion of any presumptuous claim to your future favours, or that neglectful indifference, which would render me unworthy of them.

The result of these mixt considerations leads me precisely to that mode of making my application to you, which is most constitutional in itself, as well as most adapted to my own personal situation; and I may add, that it is the mode of application most peculiarly pointed out by the present situation of national affairs, as declared from the Throne, in a public and solemn appeal to the People. Attend to the words delivered from the Throne. "That on a full consideration of "the present situation of affairs, and of the extraordinary circumstances which have produced it, His Majesty has been induced to put an end to the late Parliament, having felt it as a duty which he owed to the Constitution and to the Country, in such a situation, to recur as speedily as possible to the sense of the People, by calling a new Parliament; trusting that this means will tend to obviate the mischiefs arising from the unhappy divisions and distractions which have lately subsisted." This is a solemn voice which calls upon you, and in a most important cause. The fundamental principles of the Constitution are now appealed to, and called into exertion. You are told, that the voice of the People is the supreme and final appeal. The notorious deviation of some Parliaments from the sense of the People, has for a long time been bitterly felt and complained of by the People themselves; but it is now for the first time proclaimed by the Crown.

Ministers and their Parliaments have for many years been in the closest alliance, and bound together in a perpetual common cause. The event of a day has reversed this whole system. An accidental misunderstanding between the Ministers of the Crown and the late Parliament, has thrown open the whole appeal to

the People themselves. The occasion has been transitory, but the principle is perpetual. The principle has been recognized, not only by the most public declarations of the Ministers of the Crown, but throughout the whole course of the contest with the late Parliament, it has been admitted by the Crown itself, and particularly in the King's Answer of 27th February, to an Address of the House of Commons, on the 20th, applying for the removal of Ministers. The reason stated in the King's Answer to the House of Commons, for not complying with their request, is in these words : " Numbers of my subjects have expressed to me in " the warmest manner their satisfaction in the late " changes I have made in my Councils." In these words the principle is recognized, that the voice of the People, conveyed by addresses to the Throne, ought to carry superior weight to that of the House of Commons, in influencing the King's Councils ; a doctrine deducible from no other principle than this, that the House of Commons is no longer a real Representative of the People. As we know this to be the opinion of those confidential Ministers, whose office it was to draw up the King's Answer, it is their pledge to the public, that a Parliamentary Reform is their fundamental principle.

The great Earl of Chatham declared many years ago, with a prophetic voice, that the corrupt and inadequate representation of Parliament could not possibly out-last the century. The progress of this prophecy towards completion, has been more advanced by the single act of the late dissolution of Parliament, and the ground upon which the late Parliament was dissolved, than by all the events which have happened in the lapse of near twenty years, since that prophecy was pronounced. Can it be wondered at, that any such measures, on the part of the Crown, should be popular, which have given a firm footing to this most favoured doctrine of the People, that the authority and existence of Parliament ought to cease, when it no longer speaks the

the sense of the People. If in the present inadequate and corrupt state of Parliamentary Representation, re-elections should only produce change of parties, but not introduce the sense of the People into Parliament, some other remedy must be sought for, until that great point be accomplished, viz. That the Voice of the People shall prevail in Parliament.

Prudent men always feel a propensity to keep things in a quiescent state as long as they will remain so, and not even precipitate reformations, unless with very fair and peaceable prospects. In the uncertain state of human affairs, occasional expedients serve as harbingers, to introduce new principles by reasonable gradations. Of this kind I take to be an expedient much known of late years in the British Government, by the term of Parliamentary Influence. The system of Parliamentary Influence arose after the Revolution, and served as a kind of substitute for prerogative. The tyrannous prerogatives of the House of Stuart were finally overthrown by the People upon the most avowed popular doctrines, viz. That all power proceeds from the People, and that all government ought to be instituted for their welfare and happiness. Notwithstanding this compleat victory on the part of the People, the external forms of the Constitution were not so much altered as might have been expected from the principles then established. Influence, which implies consent, and which is certainly not a Tory doctrine, was established as a kind of practical compromise between the old claims of Royalty and the newly asserted rights of the People. Had the statesmen of those times undertaken a total renovation of the Constitution, they would have probably thrown every thing into inextricable confusion. The state of parties (which term implies both men and measures) would have made such a project totally impossible during the reign of King William. Prudence therefore dictated forbearance.

During the reign of Queen Anne, Influence grew by degrees into form and system, but that whole reign being occupied in war, civil objects fell into the back ground ; and besides, the civil contests, which had remained after the Revolution, were in a state of suspension during her reign. The Queen united in her own person both the rights and the wrongs of her own family. For, though a daughter of James the Second, her rights of possession rested upon principles totally subversive of the rights of descent. The decision therefore of civil contests between the Crown and People, was reserved for the period immediately succeeding the death of the Queen ; I call it the civil contest between the Crown and People, because that issue was tried in the persons of the two Princes then contending for the succession. At that time Parliamentary Influence was so far reduced to system, by the Minister of those days, Sir Robert Walpole, as to become an organ of executive administration. After the defeat of the Prince of the House of Stuart by arms, the succession in the House of Hanover was maintained by this system of Parliamentary Influence, under the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole. The application of this Influence, as it was not in itself constitutional, was at least reserved for beneficial purposes ; that is to say, for the establishment of the Protestant Religion, of the peace and of the commerce of the country. These were the leading features of the administration of Sir Robert Walpole.

At a later period, we have still seen this principle of influence in Parliament existing, and exerted in the support of national objects, viz. during the illustrious period of the Earl of Chatham's administration. To use his own phrase, he borrowed a majority of the House of Commons ; and the Duke of Newcastle, who possessed at that time both the favour of the King, and the voice of Parliament, with great prudence and magnanimity, concurred in the support of that great man and of his measures ; though both the one and the other,

other, were obtruded upon him, upon his party, and upon the King himself.

I have thus far used the term Influence without annexing the epithet corrupt. I have already said, that it is not a constitutional principle ; I am likewise fully aware and convinced, that it is of a corrupt nature and tendency ; it is sufficient for my present argument to say, that it may possibly, in certain cases, be exercised for beneficial purposes, and that in such cases it may serve as an expedient, instrumental and subsidiary, to more constitutional forms and institutions. In the hands of a wise and national Minister, it may produce the same effects of salutary counsels, as an assembly of national Representatives. And therefore to recur to the foundation of this argument, it contributes to introduce, by temperate gradations, that balance of power in the Constitution, which may most peaceably accord with the enlargements of some rights, and the retrenchments of others, in any community, according to the various influence of events, external or internal, to which every frame of human government is liable.

I am not defending corruption as a principle of government ; I am only stating facts which depend upon shades and degrees ; viz. That Parliamentary Influence, which is undoubtedly a principle capable in itself of any extreme degree of corruption, has for more than half a century been exercised, within those limits under which the People, though discontented at various times, have nevertheless so far acquiesced, as not to make an absolute breach with their Parliaments, by reclaiming the rights of adequate Representation, and demanding an actual reformation in the Constitution of the House of Commons. A gradual course of national discontents from the commencement of the present century, though not to the most excessive degree, may have undoubtedly prepared the foundations ; but it was reserved for that most wretched period in the British annals, during the American war, to accumulate

late disgrace, defeat, taxes, dismemberment of the empire, almost the destruction of public credit and of commerce, with all the train of attending evils, thus madly heaping up the measure of national discontent, through the instrumentality of parliamentary corruptions, enormous beyond example, and intolerable beyond acquiescence. It was at this period, that the voice of the nation began to declare, " that in times of " national difficulty and distress, a just redress of " grievances can only be expected from a free and un- " corrupted Parliament. That the Representation of " the People in Parliament is become extremely un- " equal, insomuch that a great majority of Members " is returned by decayed and indigent boroughs; which " are either at the command of the Crown, and a few " great families, or else open to general venality; " whence support in Parliament may be obtained for " measures of any administration, however ruinous " they may be to the great landed and commercial " interests of this kingdom, contrary to the true in- " tent and use of the institution of Parliaments; which " unequitable distribution of the right to elect Repre- " sentatives in Parliament, is now a principal cause of " our numerous public evils, to which no radical cure " is likely to be applied, till a more adequate Repre- " sentation of the People hath been established by law," &c. &c. See the form of association agreed to at the general meeting of the county of York, held the 28th of March 1780. It has been the system of measures, connected with and derived from the American war, which has finally driven the nation to decisions which can no longer be suspended. It must now depend upon the prudent and vigorous exertions of the counties and great boroughs, to reinstate the sense of the People in Parliament, and to secure it there. They must look to the bottom of the evil. It is no longer safe to be amused with palliatives. The People are prepared to exert themselves, and the Crown has called upon them.

I cannot omit, upon this subject of influence, to say one word upon the extreme danger of tampering with suspicious and unsound principles, merely because they seem to preserve a fallacious quiet for a time. By similar reasoning even summary and arbitrary power itself may be contended for with treacherous plausibility. Influence is the seedling of corruption. Corruption is not less incroaching nor less fatal to any civil Constitution than arbitrary power, and leads through all the gradations of evil, finally to the establishment of that power. The American War was the creature of corruption. Had the objects of that war been accomplished, a final period would have been put to the liberties of the British Constitution. That war has cost to Great Britain and to mankind, the destruction of one hundred thousand lives, and of one hundred millions of British property, and from the Crown of Great Britain it has torn the greatest and most honourable dominion that ever adorned a royal diadem. These are the works of Corruption.

But Corruption has at last destroyed itself. It has drawn forth a new æra in the British Constitution, and by a singular course of events has overturned even that false balance of the Constitution, which was established through Corruption. The case lies within a small compass. Rotten and venal boroughs have for many years past sent venal and dependent Members to Parliament. The Minister, for the time being, having hitherto been in possession of extensive means of Corruption, has drawn over an hireling majority to the Crown. But Corruption has at last outstript its own work, and has exhausted its own resources. The patronage of America is lost. Contracts are gone. Pensions are limited and reduced. Exorbitant emoluments are crushed by want of means. Many defalcations have been made from the influence of the Crown, by the abolition of inefficient and sinecure places. The Ministers of the Crown will henceforward be reduced to taxes and parsimony, which are not suitable means

to procure a majority of venal delegates, or to maintain in full force corrupt influence, as a system of Government. As long as the Minister had plenitude of means to purchase venal voices, this parliamentary traffic went on in a regular system, though constantly enhancing upon itself in profusion and exorbitance. But when the means begin to fail, the consequence is inevitable. Corruption, as a system of administration, must of necessity fall to pieces for want of cement; and as we have long since thrown away our constitutional compass, the state of Government must be driven afloat to the mercy of every wind or wave of passion or party.

The system of Administration through the House of Commons is shaken in its foundations, and we have no constitutional system to recur to. The state of Administration for two or three years past, during the late Parliament, has already given the strongest indications that this is our real situation. We have had five Administrations within the period of twenty-one months, from March 1782, to December 1783; viz. the fall of Lord North's upon its own ruins, the American war; after this came the Marquis of Rockingham's Administration, the Earl of Shelburne's, the Duke of Portland's, and the present Administration. It is now a matter under experiment, whether the present or any future administration will become more permanent than those of late have been. If this is to depend upon the supposed introduction of the voice of the People into the new Parliament, I think it was hardly worth the experiment, because the new Parliament cannot be returned upon any principle different from the last. The same proportion continues of rotten and venal boroughs, and the sense of the People cannot flow from venal and inadequate representation. The venal and rotten boroughs may be thrown into other hands than they were in the late Parliament, and more of them may fall into the hands of one party for a time. But as there is no new solid principle of reformation introduced

duced into the election of the present Parliament, there can be no reason to expect any permanent system of Government, from a change of names alone.

At present the whole expectation of the free and disinterested part of the nation is turned towards some fundamental reform of Parliament. If that great event should take place, the nation may once more resume new life, and the promoters of it will justly deserve the title of Saviours of their Country. But if we are to grovel on in the old wretched and corrupt system, what can be expected but universal discontent, and the resentments of a People basely betrayed? The venal instruments of any such system, of open and hazardous warfare with their country, will demand excessive wages for their iniquity, or desert the desperate service. And if the funds of prostitution should prove scanty or inadequate, Ministers themselves will be bought and sold. Consider the principle upon which Administration stands, as conducted under Parliamentary Influence. As long as the means are adequate, a ministerial majority may be maintained; but the moment there is any question of the sufficiency of the means of Corruption, it infuses an eternal spirit of division. No proposition can be more certain in Logic, or more obvious even as an arithmetical point. Suppose of three hundred Members, liable to influence, that the Minister can bribe two hundred, what can the remaining hundred do, but humbly cringe to the Minister for the hopes of succession to his favour, upon promise of obedient servility. But if the Minister should only have it in his power to pay one hundred out of three, there will be a constant majority against the Ministry for the time being, seeking under various leaders and various factions successively to obtain possession of the Patronage of Corruption. The principle of Influence is then exactly reversed in its operation, and Corruption itself produces the dissolution of every Government founded upon Corruption. In a short time any parliamentary set of venal Members will become sensible

of their own strength by combinations. They will create their own Ministers, and again destroy them day by day.

The Government of Corruption has had its day; it is now come to its natural dissolution. Ministers themselves must look for their future safety in the adoption of a new principle. They must aspire to the character of national Ministers, and with a national Parliament they may make to themselves some solid foundation to stand upon. But there is another more important object of our consideration, which holds the first rank in our country, whose honour and safety will be placed upon firm grounds, by the exchange of an uncertain and disgraceful Government, founded upon principles of corruption, for one founded upon the true principles of the Constitution: I mean the Crown. The kingly state has for many years been debased by the principle of corruption. This principle, as far as relates to the Minister, may, by possibility, be applied to the support of salutary measures, and in such cases may constitute merit in him, because any such measure ostensibly proceeds from him, is proposed, debated, and carried into effect by him, and presumptively would not have taken place without his advice and patronage. But it is not the same with the Crown. There are no words in which an argument can be stated, to establish the necessity of a corrupt influence of the Crown, over a representative assembly, in order that such an assembly may be directed to acts beneficial to their Constituents; because any such acts would flow without constraint, either from themselves, or from the suggestions of the People: whereas in any doubtful cases, where the Crown can be suspected of entertaining separate views, detrimental to the public good, the imputation will always attach against the possession of that corrupt power, which is necessary for the accomplishment of bad purposes alone. The People will entertain perpetual jealousy and disgust, as long as they see the Crown pertinaciously contending for a power which cannot

cannot benefit them, and which exposes them to the pernicious effects of any wicked or corrupt measures in that Parliament which was instituted for their security alone. The Crown will receive no thanks for any popular acts, and will be loaded with bitter and clamorous reproaches for any measures adverse to the sense of the Public.

I know very well that if the efficacy of this system of Parliamentary Influence were now in as full force as it has been, it would be vain to oppose any arguments of reformation. But my argument applies to the Crown in this manner. That the means of Influence having been most enormously dissipated by the American war, and its consequences, Parliaments for the future, in proportion to their profligacy and corruption, will be less tractable to the Ministers of the Crown, from the want of adequate means of influence. Considering the popular obloquy and discontents to which the Crown had been exposed for many years, on account of the implied corruption of Parliament—Considering that the People are at length roused by national distress to demand reform, and that such a demand can no longer be safely denied or delayed—Considering that a transitory elective assembly of venal delegates cannot have any natural connection with the Crown beyond their own objects of corruption; and that in pursuit of their private interests, the choice would be perfectly indifferent to them, whether to betray the King or their Constituents—Considering that in any case of great national discontents and troubles, personal fear might induce them to desert the Crown—Considering that national power resides in the body of the People at large, and not in the persons of Members of Parliament—Considering more especially, that the authority of the House of Commons stands attainted by the Crown itself, if it should be at any time contradictory to the general voice of the People—That the declared sense of the King's most confidential Ministers is in favour of Parliamentary Reform—That the most earnest

attention

attention of the Public is bent upon that object—That the old system of Parliamentary Corruption is exhausted to the last dregs—It appears to me beyond doubt or hesitation, that any real friend to the Crown would advise the renunciation of that decayed and ruinous system, and make a common cause between the Crown and the People, upon the constitutional foundation of the limited monarchy of Great Britain, in which the King and the People may enjoy their distinct but consistent rights.

The Constitution of Great Britain is not Republican, nor would the sense of the nation concur in the abolition of the limited monarchy, and the introduction of a Republican form of Government. Great Britain enjoys every possible benefit which can flow from equal laws and equal liberty. But the division of property is by no means equal; and without some principle of equalizing property, no Republican form can subsist. The state of property is the land-mark of the Constitution, and the state of landed property is the fundamental consideration. The property arising from industry, from commerce and manufactures, and all other personal properties, have a Republican tendency; and it is upon the attemperature of these two principles that the mixt monarchy subsists. I contend, therefore, that it would be infinitely more for the permanent interest and security of the Crown, to take its station according to that natural balance of the Constitution, which would emerge upon an equal representation of the People, than to enter into an avowed contention with the nation, of governing unconstitutional through the corruption of Parliament.

The original principle of influence was introduced insensibly, before the People were aware of the great blot in our Constitution, the excessive inadequacy of representation. At the first issue, they thought at least that they were governed by their Representatives. This opinion suspended the progress of their discontent to

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an extreme degree. It is one thing upon any casual dissatisfaction, with this or that particular measure, for the People to reason with them thus: persons in whom we have a general confidence as our representatives, and as bound in one common interest with ourselves, have adopted measures adverse to our sentiments, but we acquiesce, in consideration of our general confidence. It is a very different case to challenge the People directly upon the avowed principle of governing them by persons not of their election, nor partaking in any common interest with them, but by an assemblage of venal and prostitute votes, kept in pay by the Ministers of the Crown, deriving their own emoluments by the sacrifice of all the interests of their constituents. I say these cases are very different; and if the People have hitherto acquiesced, yet it has been with continually increasing discontent, in proportion as they have felt public evils encroaching upon them to an unsupportable degree. As they have become more enlightened upon the subject, by an explicit knowledge of the case, they have felt the intolerable insult upon their understandings, as well as upon their constitutional rights and interests, to submit any longer in silence, without making a formal demand for an adequate representation of the People in Parliament.

It certainly is not prudent in general to lay too great a stress upon sudden and transitory expressions of the People at large; nevertheless, where reason evidently concurs with those expressions, they are entitled to the most serious attention. The natural construction of those popular sentiments, which have strongly prevailed in the course of the late general election, may reasonably be stated as amounting to this proposition; restore to the People an adequate and efficient representation in the House of Commons, and upon that condition, the People will joyfully concur in the establishment and confirmation of all the legal and constitutional Prerogatives of the Crown. The popular motto of the present occasion is, the King and Constitution.

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A very novel and extraordinary alliance has taken place between the Crown and the Popular Party. What can be the inducement to this measure on the part of the People? Why have they annexed the King's name? Why have they not confined themselves to their own peculiar doctrines, the reprobation of corrupt and inadequate representation, and the demand of a free Parliament? The reason of this conduct seems to be, that they feel, for this occasion at least, a common cause with the Crown which they have not heretofore experienced. Upon former occasions, when the People have complained of the corruption of Parliament and of inadequate representation, the Ministers of the Crown have always stood forth the champions and defenders of Parliament, contending that the voice of the People can be heard only in the House of Commons, and that every other mode is factious and unconstitutional: whereas they have now given the solemn sanction of the Crown to the groundwork of popular discontents, upon inadequate representation and corruption of Parliament, by admitting once for all, that the House of Commons may upon many occasions not speak the sense of the People; and that when such a case occurs, the general expression of the sense of the People carried by themselves to the Throne, ought to supersede the partial sentiments of the House of Commons; and that it is a duty owing from the Crown to the Constitution and to the Country, on such occasions to recur as speedy as possible to the sense of the People. The People have therefore joined issue with the Crown in a common cause; and the compromise, constructively resulting, as above stated, is very consistent on their part, and equitable on both sides, *viz.* to restore an adequate and efficient representation to the People, and to concur without contest in the admission and establishment of all the legal prerogatives of the Crown. Common interest and common consent open the way to this accommodation between the Crown and the People; an union which alone can restore dignity to the Crown, authority

authority to Parliament, and domestic peace to our country.

Gentlemen, I have now finished my address to you. If you should approve the sentiments which I have laid before you, it is upon that ground alone that I can presume to offer myself as a candidate for your future favours. I have thought it indispensable on my part to make this declaration to you of my public principles upon the most important point, which is now brought under national consideration, on the part both of the Crown and of the People, *viz.* the constitution of the House of Commons as a Representative of the People. You have been called upon from the Throne, to contribute your proportion of national authority, towards the establishment of such an House of Commons as shall speak the real sense of the People. This is, indeed, a most awful trust for you, as Electors of Great Britain, to delegate. It would be great presumption in me, after having stated to you this solemn appeal from the Throne, to obtrude myself upon you even as a candidate for receiving so great a trust, without expressing at the same time, that I have nothing to tender to you worthy of your notice, but the offer and solemn assurance of my most earnest endeavours to execute any public trust with industry, fidelity and disinterestedness. If my former conduct in Parliament may in any degree have entitled me to the confidence of my Country, it is the only reward that I seek; and it is now the only consideration which I can, or which I wish to suggest to you, as the motive of your choice inasmuch as any such thoughts may be directed towards me.

I have taken the liberty to address you thus explicitly and without reserve, because I think mere customary words of profession are at any time frivolous, and unworthy either to be given or to be received, particularly at moments like the present. This Address to you flows from the respect which I entertain for you, as well as from the constant desire which I feel to act at

all times in an irreproachable and consistent character. I have no other ambition but to receive a public trust upon principles of honour, and to execute that trust with my best abilities to the satisfaction of an honourable and independent body of Constituents, and for the good of our common Country. Our Country will then, and then only, be in safety, when Parliaments, chosen upon the true principles of the Constitution, shall speak the genuine sense of the People.

I am,

With the greatest respect and consideration,

Gentlemen,

Your much obliged

and faithful humble servant,

Paris, May 18, 1784.

D. H A R T L E Y.

*To the right worshipful the Mayor and
Corporation ;
To the worshipful the Wardens and
Corporation of the Trinity House,
And to the worthy Burgeses of the
town of Kingston upon Hull.*

T O

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES JAMES FOX.

FOR some years past you have uniformly avowed yourself to be an advocate for Parliamentary Reform ; you have said that the influence of the Crown ought to be *entirely* destroyed, meaning, I presume, its influence over the decisions of Parliament, but especially over those of the House of Commons ; and it has been the endeavour of your friends to hold you forth as more sincere and more in earnest in this great cause than the present Minister.

Your speech on the 7th of May, 1782, when Secretary of State, did you, I will allow, great honour ; but it did not seem altogether consistent with the zeal of your professions on that occasion, that you was previously so little industrious in impressing on the minds of your friends and connections, the importance of carrying the measure to be proposed, which was exactly the same as that which Mr. Sawbridge has determined to submit to-morrow to the consideration of Parliament. The remissness of the Marquis of Rockingham on the same occasion, I also thought highly blameable, notwithstanding

the plea of ill health which was urged in his behalf. If the First Lord of the Treasury was too ill to give the business his personal attention, neither of the Secretaries of State had that excuse to plead. But the plain fact was, that the cause was neglected by a Cabinet of reforming Ministers, and the question was lost. I am not arguing in favour of a corrupt exertion of ministerial influence, because there is no corrupt principle, nor can there be a corrupt end in a Minister's attempting to place a rod over himself, by establishing the independency of Parliament. Were he even to make it known to those who held emoluments at his disposal, that they must either act with fidelity to the Constitution on such an occasion, or forfeit those emoluments, I should think he did no more than his duty as an honest man and upright servant of the Public. When I placed in contrast your own supineness, at the period of which I am speaking, to the surprizing activity, the animation, the ardour, and the indefatigable labour exerted but a little before by yourself and your partizans, on questions as inferior to that of reforming a corrupt Legislature, as is the raising of a *Minister* to the framing of a *Constitution*, or the nomination of a *Judge* to the institution of a *national code of laws*, I confess, Sir, it was at the expence of your consistency, that I was able to reconcile your conduct to your situation, or your former professions. But, Sir, if any allowances are to be made for the subordinate rank which you might then be supposed to have held in the cabinet, what are we to say to your conduct, when, in 1783, you was presumed to be the *primum mobile* of the political machine? In truth, Sir, it will not bear the touch of investigation. You made a speech; you gave your vote; and that was all. Your friends found fault with Mr. Pitt's propositions as too confined; which in truth I think they were: but, of your own plan of Parliamentary Reform, we never heard a word; nor did the doctrines held forth in your speech upon Mr. Pitt's propositions, impress us with a persuasion, that you had at heart any Reform at all. I cannot, Sir, presume to affront your understanding so far as to say, that,

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in respect to Representation, and the duration of Parliaments, you do not know the Constitution, nor comprehend the principles of reason and justice ; but I will undertake to prove, whenever properly called upon, that the doctrines maintained by you in the speech to which I allude, and the impressions which you then endeavoured to make upon your hearers, on the two cardinal points of *Representation* and the *duration of Parliaments*, were neither consonant with the English Constitution, nor with the principles which are essential to the freedom of the People.

Having blamed both yourself and the Marquis of Rockingham for indifference and supineness, on what I esteem the FIRST of ministerial duties, I wish to say one word more on ministerial interference, in favour of a Parliamentary Reform. If, for all the purposes of support to *their own* power, success to their own measures, and self-defence against the attacks of an opposition, they should exert all the authority and influence of their stations, and make the emoluments of their dependents pledges for their attachment and subserviency—and then on the *People's Question* of Parliamentary Reform, so essential to the very existence of our future liberties, they should make a merit of not using either influence or solicitation, although they knew their dependants to be hostile to the cause, and thereby encourage those dependants to defeat the measure ; if this, I say, should be their conduct, it would, in my opinion, be the very consummation of ministerial profligacy. And so, Sir, must I, in like manner, consider it to be the consummation of faction and treachery to the public, when leaders of opposition shall move heaven and earth to carry a party question, and upon occasion of a motion, truly constitutional, and of the highest possible importance to the public, as is that of Mr. Sawbridge, of which he has given notice for to-morrow, shall leave their friends wholly unsolicited for its support, and consequently encouraged, either to neglect or to negative the question, as their indifference

difference to the good of their country, or their enmity to freedom shall dispose them.

I need not, Sir, inform you, that such a conduct as I have described hath been attributed to yourself, both when in and when out of power. I need not tell you, that you are thought to have bartered away all Parliamentary Reform, as a condition of an union with Lord North being granted you. Could impartial and intelligent men have doubted of this fact, the baffling of all efforts towards Reform both here and in Ireland during your united ministry; and your attempt upon India, carrying on the face of it the intention and the means of maintaining a corrupt influence over Parliament, to an extent beyond all example, and hitherto beyond the very conception of any mind less daring than your own, must have convinced them of its truth.

How far such a conviction, and other impressions unfavourable to your motives for having entered into that coalition have extended throughout the kingdom, your own too certain knowledge make it unnecessary for me to point out; and your own feelings will forbid you to forget: But I will take the liberty of pointing out to you how, in my opinion, you may best retrieve that unfortunate step, and open a prospect of regaining that degree of public confidence of which you was once possessed. I speak not of the confidence of unprincipled factions, the attachment of men led away by the madness of party rage, nor of the approbation of shallow persons, whom your eloquence can persuade out of their senses; but I speak of the sensible, the sober, and the thinking part of the community, and of that mass of Englishmen, who are happily out of the reach of your fascinating powers of elocution.

This, then, is my advice: If a sacrifice of Parliamentary Reform were the price paid by you for the coalition, demand of Lord North and the other adversaries of that constitutional principle, a sacrifice in turn of its pro-

proscription. Bind them to its support, or to an acquiescence at least in its success ; or abandon them that instant. If you mean henceforth to set up any pretence to public virtue, there is no middle line to take. If you yield up the point of Reform to the avowed enemies of the Constitution, 'twill be in vain, that on inferior points you be permitted to act the patriot. The disguise will be too transparent for deception. Let me therefore caution you against acting a part upon occasion of Mr. Sawbridge's motion, which must at once disgrace your own understanding, and put the finishing stroke to a character, which your coalition has placed on the verge of utter ruin. Your own individual support of that motion, while it shall be borne down by the weight of the party which acknowledges you as its leader, undoubtedly ought to be considered by the people as a mere mockery, and as a decisive proof of treachery to the public cause ; *unless your secession from the party should instantly follow.* It was on weaker grounds than these, it was on *surmises and suspicions*, and those even upon points of inferior consequence, and which also were not justified by the event, that you seceded from the Cabinet during the administration of Lord Shelburne. You then suspected that *his Lordship would not agree to the independence of America* ; you suspected that *he did not mean peace* ; and you suspected that *he had even a design to restore the old Ministry and the old system* ; and upon these grounds you forsook the Cabinet. His Lordship *did* submit to American independency, and he *did* make peace ; but he *did not* restore the old Ministry and the old system. Who *did* restore the old Ministry, that is, the Ministry of **LORD NORTH** ; and the old system, that is, *the system of Parliamentary Corruption* ? You, Sir, who formed the coalition, and who attempted to seize on *the patronage of India*, can best determine. But, Sir, to return to the point ; have you no *suspicions* that Lord North will strenuously oppose a Parliamentary Reform, that Reform which can alone put an end to Parliamentary Corruption ? And are you prepared upon those suspicions proving to be founded, to secede from your present coalition, as you did from the

the Cabinet when you *suspected* the ill intentions of the Earl of Shelburne?

You will readily perceive, Sir, that your coalition with Lord North has not had much of my approbation. Indeed, I ever considered it as the most monstrous and most indefensible alliance that ever occurred in the annals of this or any other country. But, Sir, such is the easy temper and abounding generosity of your countrymen, that, should you atone for that false step, by engaging the mass of your party, honestly to support Mr. Sawbridge's motion, and to prosecute the Reform of Parliament with sincerity and effect, I doubt not but that you might once more enjoy a large share of public approbation, together with the usual and gratifying consequences of such a circumstance. If, on the contrary, you shall either want the inclination or the power to render your country this service, you must not be surprized if she henceforth esteem you either unworthy of her confidence, or unfit for her service.

As it neither agrees with my judgment, nor suits with my inclination, to canvass points of high importance, nor to arraign characters of actors on the public stage, under fictitious signatures, whenever it can with propriety be avoided,

I subscribe myself, Sir, &c.

JOHN CARTWRIGHT.

June 7th, 1784.

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